

- Add compost and other organic material to your soil to improve its water-holding capacity.
- Keep a pitcher of cold water in the fridge, instead of running tap water until it is cool.
- Use a bucket to water your plants, not a hose.
- Water lawns early in the morning or late in the evening, not in the heat of mid-day, to prevent evaporation.

At the recommendation of state drought officials, the U.S. Drought Monitor today announced that seven counties: Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson Macon and Swain, are experiencing “extreme drought,” the fourth stage of a five stage system. Hydrological drought refers to deficiencies in water resources available for water supply and is measured based on stream flows as well as lake, reservoir and ground water levels. Ten other western counties: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Rutherford, Transylvania and Yancey, are suffering a “severe drought,” the third stage.

Drought officials say moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions have now spread from the mountains to all but seven counties in the extreme northeastern part of North Carolina. For a more detailed map, go to www.ncdrought.org.

In the southern mountains, many reservoirs are operating at below normal water levels. Stream and ground water levels in that area are also far below normal for this time of the year. The state drought advisory council advises the U.S. Drought Monitor, which publishes weekly drought advisories to assist local governments and other water users in taking appropriate drought response actions.

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